

prove that even in the ' Book of the Dead/ and Isis is  
 often called ' the  
 orttaiy<sup>5</sup> ro<sup>y</sup>al consort of Ra.' ' / That Ra was both  
 the physical sun  
 thefsun. . and the sun-god is undisputed ; but with  
 every deference  
 for the authority of so great a scholar as Lepsius, we  
 may  
 doubt whether the identification of Osiris with  
 Ra can  
 be accepted as proof that Osiris was originally  
 the sun.  
 Such For the religion of ancient Egypt<sup>2</sup> may be  
 described as  
 tions<sup>hi</sup>ca~ a confederacy of local cults which, while  
 maintaining against  
 sprang each other a certain measure of jealous  
 and even hostile  
 auempts to independence, were yet constantly subjected  
 to the fusing  
 unify and and amalgamating Influence of political  
 centralization and  
 nuuVthe philosophic thought. The history of the  
 religion appears  
 many to have largely consisted of a  
 struggle between these  
 local cults  
 of Egypt, opposite forces or tendencies. On  
 the one side there was  
 the conservative tendency to preserve the  
 local cults with all  
 their distinctive features, fresh, sharp,  
 and crisp as they had  
 been handed down from an immemorial  
 past. On the other  
 side there was the progressive tendency,  
 favoured by the  
 gradual fusion of the people under a  
 powerful central  
 government, first to dull the edge of  
 these provincial distinctions,  
 and finally to break them  
 down completely and  
 merge them in a single national religion.  
 The conservative  
 party probably mustered in its ranks the  
 great bulk of the  
 people, their prejudices and affections  
 being warmly enlisted  
 in favour of the local deity, with whose  
 temple and rites  
 they had been familiar from childhood ;  
 and the popular  
 dislike of change, based on the  
 endearing effect of old  
 association, must have been strongly

reinforced by the less disinterested opposition of the local clergy, whose material interests would necessarily suffer with any decay of their shrines. On the other hand the kings, whose power and glory rose with the political and ecclesiastical consolidation of the realm, were the natural champions of religious unity; and their efforts would be seconded by the refined and

<sup>1</sup> Lepsius, "Über den ersten of Egyptian religion is based on the ägyptischen Gotterkreis und seine sketch in Ad. Erman's *Ägypten und ihre geschichtlich-mythologische Entstehung*, *ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 351 sqq. Compare C. P. Tide, *6V-liche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu schichte der Religion, im Altertum Berlin*, 1851, pp. 194<sup>^</sup>. (Gotha, 1896-1903), i. 79.17.

<sup>2</sup> The view here taken of the history